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Elmer Stanford Taylor



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LOS ANGELES

To Grandma  
from Ed  
January 23, 1907.

Ed

Men's tears are many, but in them  
do rest  
the noblest things that stir within  
his breast.

















IN MEMORY OF

**Agnes Stanford Taylor**

WHO PASSED FROM EARTHLY  
BEING ON THE MORNING OF  
THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY  
OF NOVEMBER IN THE YEAR  
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SIX

BY E. R. T.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION  
IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER M CM VI



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TO A. S. T.

MY YEARS' OWN ANGEL, THOU DOST  
LEAVE ME NOW;  
BUT DEATH FALLS DEAD BEFORE THY  
STAINLESS BROW,  
FOR THOU RELIVEST IN MY HEART OF  
TEARS,  
TO BEAR ME UP THROUGH LIFE'S  
REMAINING YEARS.

November 27, 1906



# I

## AT HER DEATHBED

She saw Death charging, panoplied and  
grim,  
Full tilt upon her, yet she looked at him  
With such courageous smile, he sent a dart  
Untipped with pain through her expectant  
heart,  
And so she fell into the arms of rest  
Like a spent child upon its mother's breast.

## II

### NO MORE

The liquid music of her golden voice,  
That made the soul with freshened thrill  
    rejoice,  
    Is silent on this earth forevermore;  
Her dark-hued eyes that set my heart on  
    fire,  
And blazed, as need was, with consuming  
    ire,  
    Give not one ray from out their once  
    proud store;  
While her dear arms that oft around me  
    clung  
I ne'er shall feel again, though my fond  
    tongue  
    Importunately all the powers implore.



### III

#### BY HER COFFIN

With blossoms covered her dear body lay  
Within the coffin, folded on her breast  
Those indefatigable hands at rest,  
That strove in mastery from day to  
day.

So conquering still she seemed in loving  
way,

With all the graces seemed she so  
possessed,

We dared not doubt that all was for  
the best,

Nor dared to blench before Death's  
black array.

A tinge of color faintly dyed her cheek,  
Her lips were parted as though fain to  
speak,

While new-born beauty queened it in  
her face.

If thus her clay, what must her spirit be,  
That tried and tempered in its earthly  
race

Triumphant enters immortality.

## IV

### APRIL AND NOVEMBER

That April sky, how fair it was  
When she first promised to be mine;  
That April sky, how bright it was  
When she became forever mine.  
And brighter still that April sky  
Has shone with each recurring year  
Upon our love's memorial day;  
But nevermore for me the high  
Rejoicing when that day is here;  
For then November will be nigh,  
And on my heart remorseless lay  
Its black, appalling funeral bier.

## V

### NOT FAR

November's leaves were brown,  
And boreal breezes blew  
The naked branches through,  
When Death's dart struck her down;  
But this most precious prey  
Is not for him alway:  
E'en now I feel that she  
Is not far off from me,  
And that her spirit will  
My heart all newly fill,  
And lead my footsteps where  
They tread celestial air.

## VI

### MY VISION

When I look out upon the vast of space  
I see no star more glorious than her face;  
In sooth, as with illimitable wings,  
She seems to reach the utmost bound of  
things.

## VII

### NOT FREE

Unshackled now the chains that her dear  
    hands  
Had spent the years in fashioning for me:  
No more I spring to meet her fond  
    demands,  
How great or various whatso'er they be;  
No more I bend obedient to her charms,  
Nor kneel a devotee before her shrine;  
No more I fold her in my loving arms,  
To press her unexhausted lips to mine;  
No more I feel her as my heart's own  
    queen,  
That dominates and splendors every  
    scene; —  
Mid desolation's desert I am free;  
Such liberty is slavery's worst to me.

## VIII

### TOO LATE

Who could foretell till she was gone  
How she had filled my heart and soul;  
That though my feet went stoutly on  
Grief's bells for me must ever toll;  
That then her loveliness should seem  
To mock my poor, tear-blinded sight,  
As far beyond all wonder's dream  
In glory shone its new-born light.

Oh, let me say it still once more,  
That has been said a million times,  
And has been sung in poet-lore  
With multitude of sobbing rhymes;  
That little does the truest know  
The worth of love that's all his own,  
Till swept away on waves of woe  
It leaves him empty and alone.

Ah, then we feel if it should be  
This precious thing again were ours,  
No patient, holiest devotee  
Would build for it more hallowed bowers.  
Too late! Too late! that dreadful cry  
All helpless rends the freezing air,  
And impotent we fall, to lie  
In wretchedness that tastes despair.

## IX

### IDLE TEARS

Weep not for me, she firmly said  
When life for her was nearly sped;  
And then I smiled, nor dared to know  
The great, immedicable woe  
That would me mine when she was dead.

But now that she away has fled,  
Mine eyes in disobedience shed  
The tears that unappeasing flow —  
All idle tears.

Thou dear, departed one, who fed  
My springs of life, and sweetly led  
My footsteps from the long ago  
To where Death laid thy glories low,  
Forgive me, at this moment dread,  
These idle tears.



## X

### AS SHE WAS

No compromise was hers, but straight she  
walked

Along the shard-strown paths of Duty's way,  
Clear-eyed, courageous, never weakly balked,  
And filling every measure of the day.

The scorpion brood of malice did not bask  
Within the chambers of her fearless breast;  
For friend or enemy she wore no mask,  
Nor welcomed any but her heart's true  
guest.

E'en Chaucer's Prioress could learn from  
her

In all the arts that delicately please,  
Nor did her body's direst torture stir  
Revolt against the slightest one of these.

She was not faultless, but her love  
supplied

The place of lesser things to her denied.

## XI

### HUSHED MUSIC

She deeply touched the chords of life  
As maid, as mother, and as wife,  
Till music tracked along the ways  
Of all her bounty-gloried days;  
And we who shared the chiefest part  
In her benign, exhaustless heart,  
Now lonely sit, and list in vain  
For that excelling, lofty strain.

## XII

### MY FOUNTAIN

When tossed and tumbled in the raging  
    strife,  
That makes so large a part of human life;  
When wearied with the uneffectual pains  
That brought my head and heart such  
    paltry gains;  
When Melancholy spread its dusky wings  
Above me, and I missed the soul of things;  
When weakness held me as with giant  
    hand  
Till all my treasure seemed at its command;  
I laid my head upon her bounteous breast,  
And filled my being's urn with strength  
    and rest.

## XIII

### BODY AND SOUL

Her body was to her a sacred fane  
To be kept cleansed and free from every  
    stain;

'Twas her religion; — yet she kept control  
Of all the priceless treasures of her soul:  
So tender she, to every suffering cry  
She longed with healing hand and word to  
    fly,

Still oft lamenting that she was not strong  
To slay some raging dragon of a wrong.  
And hers the sense of that divine delight  
Of God as Father in eternal might,  
And unto Him, to crown the laboring day,—  
Last act of all,— she lowly knelt to pray.

## XIV

### HER FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

What inextinguishable youth was hers! —  
And though disease had marked her for its  
    prey,  
Age could not set its seamy characters  
Upon her face, nor turn one lock to gray.  
Within her breast the spring still bubbled  
    clear  
Of sparkling humor even when death was  
    near;  
And when he struck her down the tender  
    grace  
Of smiling resignation lit her face.

## XV

### IN LONELINESS

Unwonted loneliness has fallen on me:

For near two score of years to breathe  
an air

In common with my dearest, then to be  
Bereft of that which gave me life, yet  
fare

Still onward empty of her love and  
care,

The myriad trinkets and the gowns to  
see

Her beauteous body nevermore can  
wear,

O'erwhelm my being in such rare  
degree,

That strange, new scenes unfold in sorrow's  
tragedy.

Father and mother, children, friends the  
best,  
Have been full often swept from  
helpless me;  
But none of these the chambers of my  
breast  
Had harbored for so many years as she.  
Affection deep was theirs, to me most  
blest;  
But Love was hers, made sweetly  
manifest  
From day to day through fruitage of  
my prime;  
And now my bosom, spoiled of its dear  
guest,  
In lonely grief recalls the happy time  
When Love's all hallowed bells harmonious  
rang in chime.

## XVI

### REGRETS

O vain regrets, how great you seem —  
Beyond what all our thought can deem —  
And will not leave us to our peace,  
But sting and sting without surcease;  
And so I ponder o'er and o'er  
If I should not have loved her more;  
If I true value on her set,  
And every wish in fondness met;  
If her sweet words and loving looks  
Were not declined too oft for books;  
If this or that; — but why recount  
The total of the vast amount?  
All this is closed; and vain regret  
Cannot discharge the solemn debt;  
And so I stagger on the road  
Beneath my never lightened load.



## XVII

### WOMAN'S LOVE

We take for granted, ah, so many things,  
Some fond, unwearied heart on us  
bestows,  
Nor blinded see the torturing, hidden  
throes  
When seeming coldness her dear bosom  
wrings.

Too oft the man in fatuous folly flings  
Away the treasure he so little knows,  
And flees the all-sufficing, soft repose,  
Where every joy with healing music  
sings.

O Woman's Love, what art can measure  
thee,  
What plummet thy vast ocean depths  
can sound,  
What divination thy circumference  
bound?

If he who has thee in supreme degree  
In thy great service be deficient found,  
He should be scourged through all  
eternity.

## XVIII

### THE QUEEN

Man fills not home as does the woman: she  
Reigns there in dominance benign and free;  
Her very presence fills with balm the air;  
Her busy footsteps beat in music there;  
And when she falls, the home falls stark  
    and lone,  
While Emptiness usurps the vacant throne.

## XIX

### I DO NOT CHIDE THEE, DEATH

I do not chide thee, Death, for thou didst  
save

Her tortured body many a pang, and gave  
Such crowning beauty to her placid face,  
She seemed already of the Angel race.

## XX

### IMPOTENCE

Oh, could my weak-winged verse soar high,  
To sing of her empurpled days,  
Until it reached the farthest sky,  
'Twould yet fall short of fitting praise:  
Ah, not till now since Poesy  
Her wonders to me first revealed,  
And I to her then dared to be  
In humbleness forever sealed,  
Have I so felt my impotence  
In all the cunning ways of sense;  
In all the depthless wells of fire  
That lie within the Poet's heart,  
Obedient to the vast desire  
Of his incomparable art;  
And in the music on whose wings  
Serenely soar the loveliest things,  
That still through even the mist of tears  
Bear onward with immortal years.

## XXI

### THESE TEARS OF POESY

These tears of Poesy, how vain they are  
To tell myself and others her desert;  
Oh, may I not my heart the deeper hurt  
By dimming with them her resplendent star.



## TO DEATH

PRAY, WHO ART THOU WHOSE HORRID  
MIEN AND THREATENING SPEAR  
BESPEAK UNNUMBERED VICTIMS IN  
WOE-BREATHING STRIFE?—  
THE AGES CALL ME DEATH; AND  
SHAK'ST THOU NOT WITH FEAR?—  
AH NO; THY SPEAR'S THE KEY THAT  
OPES THE GATE OF LIFE.











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